人文研究　大阪市立大学大学院文学研究科紀要
第63巻　2012年3月　51頁～68頁

Not So Quiet on the Western Front...
—The Other War Writing and Women "Out There"

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Synopsis—*Not So Quiet... Stepdaughters of War* is an autobiographical narrative by an ambulance driver serving at the front during the First World War. In spite of the official British discourse on gender roles—women as mothers and nurses—many medical and paramilitary women's organizations were formed to serve the nation's war effort. By having firsthand experience of the war zone the heroine of the story finds that conventional femininity does not survive the war and that her patriotic mother knows nothing about the realities of war. Feeling more sympathy with male combatants, she accuses the war-mad Home Front. Women's wartime involvement and their war writing, which overturn the borderline between men and women, have not been regarded as authentic as their male counterparts. Moreover the tactical ideology of war forces women to set up as mothers and the Mother Country to be protected and then accuses women of sending men out to fight. *Not So Quiet*, as well as deconstructing women's writing, poses essential problems about the enigmatic relationship of war and gender.

I

Gender studies were almost synonymous with feminist studies—women studying women's writing or criticizing men's discriminatory texts. Concerning gender studies of the First World War it has long been the main target of scholars to show how the traditional ideas of femininity were disrupted during wartime and reconstructed afterwards. Masculinity was not considered as problematical as femininity. Recently, however, masculinity has become the focus of a wide range of interdisciplinary studies. Joanna Bourke's *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War*(Reaktion Books, 1996) is one such contribution from a historian: she discusses the impact of war on the male body through servicemen's correspondence, diaries, memoirs and sketches. Sara Cole, in *Modernism, Male Friendship, and the First World War*(Cambridge UP, 2003) analyses male friendship depicted in literary works from many perspectives. There were some pioneering works on masculinity focused on public schools and boys' organizations and male sexuality or homoeroticism during the Great War, but the male body, as Bourke points out, remains surprisingly ignored among

British historians.(12)

Anatomical and cultural analysis of the male body has become a new theme for the Great War studies, but somehow at present it seems to be restricted to either women scholars or male scholars interested in gay studies. This new trend of scholarship corresponds with reprints and re-reading of women writers of the Great War. Responding to the 1929 War Books boom, when deluges of memoirs and fiction by male combatants appeared, women writers published books based on their own firsthand experience of war, many of which were out of print or suppressed, and these began to be reprinted by Virago and the Feminist Press. They were welcomed by feminist literary scholars as good examples of feminist war-books.

Helen Zenna Smith's *Not So Quiet . . . Stepdaughters of War*(1930) is one of those writings. Helen Zenna Smith is a pseudonym of Evadne Price: a strange combination of names; Helen suggesting the link with war, if not the cause of war, Zenna inviting many interpretations, and Smith just too common, Everywoman. Virago Press reissued this novel with biographical notes of the author and Barbara Hardy's brief introduction in 1988, and the Feminist Press in the following year with Jane Marcus's very long afterword.

The title *Not So Quiet* easily connects with Erich Maria Remarque's anti-war novel *All Quiet on the Western Front*(1929): a British publisher asked her to write a spoof of Remarque's best-selling novel from a woman's point of view and suggested the title "All *Quaint* on the Western Front". She read the novel in English translation, finding the idea of "spoof" unsuitable. The outcome is a woman's war story sympathetic to Remarque's pacifist standpoint. The heroine of Price's novel is a twenty-one year old gentlewoman living in a big house in the Wimbledon Common. When the war broke out, she volunteered as a VAD (the Voluntary Aid Detachment) ambulance driver serving in France to "do her bit" for the country. She is called Nell or Nellie at home and Smith or Smithy in France. Hence comes the author's name Helen Zenna Smith. This is not a novel, but takes the form of autobiography. Not having been at the Front, Price faithfully reproduced the authentic diary of one Winifred Constance Young who had been an ambulance driver. So Barbara Hardy writes in her "Introduction", who seems to have read Young's diary. There are many parallels between the woman's war book and *All Quiet*: the first-person narrative, present tense, sisterhood corresponding to male bondings, similar plot, similar scenes. One striking difference is that in Remarque the hero dies at the end whereas in Price the heroine survives an air-raid while all the other girls die. Nevertheless, in both the third-person narrator takes over at the end to articulate the protagonist's death(*All Quiet*) or the death of the protagonist's soul and her

final resignation(*Not So Quiet*). Thus *Not So Quiet* is overall a multi-voiced text, a hybrid memoir/fiction.

There are not many monographs on *Not So Quiet*. Jane Marcus's "Afterword" entitled "Corpus/Corps/Corpse: Writing the Body in/at War" is itself a voluminous and voluble essay with a theoretical bent: using such contemporary critical terms as Bakhtinian "heteroglossia", "dialogism", "carnivalesque" and Kristevan "semiotic", she explicates the strategic discourse of woman's writing which undermines man's established war writing. Meg Albrinck in "Borderline Women: Gender Confusion in Vera Brittain's and Evadne Price's War Narrative" (*Narrative*, Oct. 1998) discusses how both writers challenge the gendering official discourse of Britain during World War I through upper-middle class young women who have volunteered for field work in the male-dominated war zone. While Brittain *resists* wartime rhetoric, Price *rejects* it outright, but both of them accommodate the dominant rhetoric by including the same knowledge of war that soldiers have so that they are authorized to speak on war. Albrinck thinks these necessary tactics to subvert the officially accepted gender script. Celia M. Kingsbury's "Propaganda, Militarism, and the Home Front in Helen Zenna Smith's *Not So Quiet . . . Stepdaughters of War*" included in *War and Words: Horror and Heroism in the Literature of Warfare*(Lexington Books, 2004) explicates the way Price challenges the words of propaganda which glorify both war and dying for one's country. She trenchantly attacks British society, the big machinery of war, polluted with false words. Lastly, Laurie Kaplan in "Deformities of the Great War: The Narratives of Mary Borden and Helen Zenna Smith" (*Women and Language* 27, Fall 2004) examines characteristics of style, language and imagery employed by both writers. Mary Borden, like Vera Brittain, who served as a VAD nurse, witnessed at firsthand "The Forbidden Zone" of masculine experience and man's body. Both Borden and Price found the conventional narrative inadequate to depict the ghastliness of war, and explored repetitive language, ellipses, epic catalogues, fractured form and sense-laden imagery. Those devices rejected the new realism, and produced women's anti-patriotic, anti-patriarchal protest against war, Kaplan concludes.

All of the essays introduced above (possibly all written by women critics) focus on literary tools that Price used to expose the realities of war. According to their interpretations, she defied, both in form and content, like other women writers, the preconceptions about "feminine" writing, and produced an ironic, indignant and subversive text. It is true that *Not So Quiet* has a pacifist message and attacks mothers and fathers at the home front who gladly sacrifice their children, believing in false war words. "Flag-waggers" she calls them. She renounces gender roles of women as mothers and nurses, but this is not an obvious

feminist text. It is possible to think that this book criticizes masculinization and militarism on the part of women: war deprives women of their femininity and decomposes women's bodies as shown at the end of the story. Price, in real life, may not be called a feminist as she did not mind playing the conventional feminine role: an adorer of housekeeping, gardening and cooking, a writer of children's books and pulp fiction, an astrologer concocting horoscopes for television programmes and fashion magazines for years etc.(Marcus, 263-4) It is not clear whether she is welcoming wartime gender confusion as a challenge to socially accepted gender roles or threatened with the loss of feminine qualities. This book invites many interpretations: a "politically correct" version of Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* (1928), another ambulance drivers' story which was banned on the charge of lesbianism (Marcus, 285); a story akin to "that of a prewar girls" boarding school—all silly nicknames, midnight feasts and somewhat arch and saucy innuendo" (William Boyd, *The New York Times*, April 30, 1989). Evadne Price may have simply wanted to write a sensational novel which would sell like *All Quiet*, answering the publisher's commission: the book was finished in six weeks.

Apart from the author's intention, which is difficult to pinpoint, this war writing is interesting and important for considering women's situation and British society in the time of the First World War. Examining the situation of women "out there" and comparing it with other women's war narratives and canonical works of soldier poets, I will try to delve into what lies in this fascinating war writing by a woman.

II

Not So Quiet traces the experience of six young women of a VAD motor ambulance convoy. They carried wounded soldiers in northern France from railroad to field hospital to graveyard. It was an appalling and terror-stricken job. They had all volunteered "to help our brave soldiers to fight for world freedom" (117) in the words of their bullying ruthless Commandant "Mrs Bitch."

Before the First World War was begun, already in existence were several women's organizations to serve the nation's war effort. VAD, a voluntary organization providing field nursing services in time of war, was set up in 1909 as part of the Territorial Army Scheme, with the help of the British Red Cross and the Order of St.John of Jerusalem in England.[1)] FANY (the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry Corps) was formed earlier in 1907 by Sergeant-Major Baker with the aim to tend Britain's soldiers on the battlefield. The recruits had to

be trained in cavalry work and later in driving ambulances to get to casualties as fast as possible. The FANYs were mostly upper-class women who could afford to pay for the fee for the riding school and to provide their own uniform and first aid outfit. FANY's offers of help were rejected at the War Office, but the enthusiastic drivers and nurses forged links with the more enlightened Belgium Army. FANY is the only prewar voluntary women's organization to survive two world wars and still flourishes today.(Terry, 25-31; Condell & Liddiard, 49-51) Broken away from FANY in 1909, WCC(the Women's Convoy Corps) was formed for the Bulgarian wars under the leadership of Mrs Mabel St.Clair Stobart. Interested in the women's suffrage movement, she believed that demonstrating women's capability to contribute to the national defence was of utmost importance. WCC was officially accepted as a VAD in 1910. After helping in the Balkan War in 1912-13, she immediately established in 1914 a similar Women's Sick and Wounded Convoy Corps to set up medical help in Belgium and France. There she suffered heavy bombing and imprisonment by the Germans and narrowly escaped. When Austrians invaded Serbia in 1914, she answered a call for help in Serbia and led medical units to the front lines.(Terry, 32; Tylee, 33; Condell & Liddiard, 47; Gould, 115-6)

In the summer of 1914 when men marched to war, women in those voluntary groups had to battle for the right to make a contribution to the war effort. Now back to VADs, in which Nell Smith was a member, they were a well established force during the First World War. Though the majority of members were women from the middle or upper classes, as men were called up by military service, both sexes could enlist as VADs. Each member was called a detachment or a VAD, and there were male detachments and female detachments which were smaller than men's. Although registered with the War Office, VAD had to rely on voluntary contributions, and received poor remuneration. Women were accepted in the traditional role of nursing, but only in the home territory, not near the fighting lines on the Continent. When Katherine Furse, who was to become a Commander-in-Chief, took VAD nurses to Boulogne to set up a rest station in October 1914, they were rapidly called upon to help. In 1916 the first VAD motor ambulance convoy was established.(Ouditt, 13-15)

Thelka Bowser, a Serving Sister of the Order of St.John and a member of the VADs, accounted for the work of VADs.

> Members undertook a variety of work from cleaning, cooking and elementary nursing, to driving, porterage and mechanical repairs. Their rôle was essentially a supportive one, assisting trained nursing staff and helping to keep hospitals and ambulance services operating. (iv)

"[D]riving, porterage and mechanical repairs" are men's work, not fitting into the women's traditional role for caring for the sick and wounded, though association with hospitals may lend them "an aura of womanliness." (Watson, 114) Transporting the dead and dying soldiers in modern vehicles, and caring for the engines as if they were horses are a demanding job. Nursing the wounded in field hospitals, for that matter, is also "the most polluted of war work." (Marcus, 243) VAD nurses and ambulance drivers, who were brought up to be respectable ladies leading a comfortable life at home with servants, are exposed to the most hideous war scenes next to battle zones. They are all volunteers and without any sufficient training, whom only their patriotic parents are proud of.

The First World War was the first war in which organized field transport of wounded in motor ambulances was introduced in place of ambulance wagons.[2] In those early years of motoring when motor vehicles were rare and driving skills were not widespread, it was not regarded as feminine for a woman to drive a car. As the war progressed, motor transport of all kinds became increasingly important, and women took it over from men who had to work in the trenches. Driving at this period was masculine and upper-class. Upper-class women who had learned to drive on a father's or brother's car, joined ambulance services with *ésprit de corps* borrowed from their brother-officers.(Condell & Liddiard, 46, 49-50)

Thelka Bowser, in *The Story of British V.A.D Work in the Great War* quoted above, accounts for an "allurement about driving."

> It is a hard life, but has its many compensations, for the woman who really loves her car will tell you that there is an all-powerful allurement about driving, and the difficulties of the circumstances add to rather than detract from the fascination of the work.
>
> Above and beyond all, these women have the satisfaction of knowing that they have actually given men to the Army, whilst they themselves are doing the merciful work of convoying the wounded and the sick. (235)

Thus Bowser concludes the account of the "Motor V.A.D Units in France" chapter. The preceding description gives the details of their unduly harsh routine as follows. All girls must be present at 7:00a.m. roll-call, even though they may have been out driving part of the night. They work on their cars except for an interval for breakfast and finish the cleaning of their engines at 10.00 a.m., when the Commandant holds engine inspection. The Convoy divided into two sections, one section does driving at call for the day, and the other section does

cleaning in the house. The sections alternate their duties day by day. The driving section on their return clean their cubicles, and perhaps mend a punctured tyre until their cars are in perfect order for the road. After lunch they can take a rest, but have to "stand by", getting blankets and stretchers ready for 6:00 p.m. evacuation, and off they start.

It is doubtful whether the dashing image of the work compensates all those hardships and horrors. Bowser's *The Story of British V.A.D Work in the Great War*, originally published in *The Red Cross*, the official journal of the British Red Cross Society, in August 1917, is an authorized version of the story. Helen Smith's version contains a more or less similar routine of hardships, but also contains her suppressed agonies expressed in angry, bitter, harsh words.

Not So Quiet begins with these words: "We have just wakened from our first decent sleep for weeks—eight glorious dreamless hours of utter exhaustion." It is a story of sleeplessness, exhaustion, disgust, horror, anger. Carrying loads of wounded soldiers, groaning, shrieking, shouting, on the mountain roads with holes and stones covered in snow, hearing guns booming, is a dangerous task in hell. Girls are provided with spoiled food scantier than army rations, doing from navvy's work to cleaning the cook's dirty, stinking room. Smithy says by the bye "the foulest and most disgusting job" is cleaning the insides of an ambulance. When the doors are opened, everywhere stink stale vomit, urine, trench feet and gangrenous wounds of the poor wretches they carried the night before. Smithy imagines no one at home will ever imagine what "cleaning" entailed when they read the laudatory article about "Our Splendid Women" in a newspaper over the breakfast table.

Why is this harsh job allotted to gently-bred, well educated women, she thinks:

> It astounds me why the powers-that-be at the London headquarters stipulate that refined women of decent education are essential for this ambulance work. Why should they want this class to do the work of strong navvies on the cars, in addition to the work of scullery maids under conditions no professional scullery-maid would tolerate for a day? Possibly this is because this is the only class that suffers in silence, that scorn to carry tales. We are such cowards. We dare not face being called "cowards" and "slackers," which we certainly shall be if we complain. (50)

The War Office tactically made use of the class code of honour with which they were brought up. Though this class of women has drawbacks—housekeeping drudgery is entirely left into the hands of the servant class— they have their own sense of decorum and are

willing to do "the lowliest task from the highest motive." (Bowser, 23) They will remain silent to the horror. Further possible motive for aiming at this class is that those decent, innocent women would be less likely to be involved with love affairs with the men (Ouditt, 23) and would not bear "war babies" like lower class women.[3] Whatever the government's policies, it would have been difficult to recruit so many middle-class volunteers into VADs without a long-established virtue of philanthropy in Britain. This very British-like tradition of charity, deep-rooted among the population, saw its golden age in the nineteenth century. A necessity in working class communities, it attracted benevolence from all classes of people, especially from women who felt the need to contribute to the neighbourhood. Combined with the fervor of evangelism and social reform, visits to slums were popular in the Victorian age. Frank Prochaska, in his *The Voluntary Impulse: Philanthropy in Modern Britain*, defines philanthropy, "as love of one's fellow man, an action or inclination which promotes the well-being of others"(7), and studies it not from the point of view of institutions but from personal relationships. British people's interest in what happens around their homes and streets, which is often regarded as the origin of novels, is also at the root of philanthropy.

Women's involvement in voluntary contributions in Victorian slums was taken over by benevolent and 'self-lowering' women. Their only reward in the time of the Great War was patriotism. In an interesting argument about 'Soldiering as philanthropy' David Trotter maintains that the subaltern's paternalism or womanly concern towards his men entails self-lowering, which takes him down into irredeemable tedium and disgust. The labyrinthine trench-system, in his view, is a replacement of the Victorian slum or the East End. As a representative of the West End the subaltern looks after his men and polices them. He concludes that "trench warfare was Victorian philanthropy's last hurrah (or last gasp)". (Trotter, 42-9) So must have been women's self-derogatory war work.

Ⅲ

Smithy and other VAD ambulance drivers, all from wealthy families—one named Tosh, the niece of an earl—volunteered to "do their bit for the dear old flag". They looked like "England's Splendid Daughters," but as the title shows, they are "stepdaughters of war", not full daughters of war. Smithy satirizes and ridicules in a fit of temper the eternal catch-phrase of the newspapers "doing our bit" which the mob hangs on to. She denies a patriotic spirit in those girls who enlisted: out of curiosity, wanting to get away from boredom at home, for man-hunting, simply from love of danger etc., she says, they enlisted. Even if they

had had "indomitable pluck" or "wonderful high spirits", she confesses, they lost them the first night they arrived.(134-5) The utmost degradation they were subjected to is the cause of this self-humiliation.

Stepdaughters, as against full daughters, in the process loses womanliness and violates the code of conduct expected of ladies. Smithy daily uses dirty words, cuts her hair short like a boy's, and has an adventure with two Captains to go to a German prisoners' concert. The change in sexual morality is most noticeable. As the girls took part in men-dominated war zones, the subject position of woman shifted to one outside ordinary femininity. She is well aware that she uses filthy words in everyday conversation because she has contact with blaspheming soldiers. (91) She uses "*strong, vulgar* expletives" which her mother is shocked to hear, for mother wants "women in France to have a womanly, refining, softening effect on the troops." (80) She employs battlefront argot like "7:00 ack emma," "flea-bag" instead of sleeping bag, which guarantees her knowledge of life at the front.(Higonnet, 1993: 214)

> We, who once blushed at the public mention of childbirth, now discuss such things as casually as we once discussed the latest play...chastity seems a mere waste of time in an area where youth is blotted out so quickly....
>
> Once we were not allowed out after nightfall unchaperoned; now we can drive the whole night through a deserted countryside with a man—provided he is in khaki and our orders are to drive him. (165-6)

All these changes suggest that the known feminine world ends with the war.

Smithy also knows the reality of men in the war zone: "trainloads of broken human beings: half-mad men pleading to be put out of their misery; torn and bleeding and crazed men pitifully obeying orders like a herd of senseless cattle, ..." (29) They are no longer men, but a flock of senseless sheep straggling pitifully. Mary Borden writes in a similar vein : "Certainly they were men once. But now they are no longer men." (44) Mary Borden, a rich, young American writer, volunteered with the French Red Cross and funded her hospital close to the front. Working on a ward she found both men and women asexed: "There are no men here, so why should I be a woman?" Instead she saw "heads and knees and mangled testicles." (44) Whether cattle or anatomical parts of the body, this is the stern, merciless truth about war which it is forbidden to purvey home.[4]

At the same time she is fully aware of the big lie infiltrating the Home Front through rubbish newspaper articles and government circumspect propaganda. Her patriotic parents,

very proud of their two daughters and a son whom they sacrificed for the war: Mother competing with Mrs. Evans-Mawnington in recruiting young men and in heading committees; Father swanking at his club showing off his daughter's cheery letter home—the only kind of letter they expect from her— *"It is such fun out here, and of course I'm loving every minute of it..."* (30)

Smithy imagines a letter which reveals the truth of the front—the only kind of letter she wants to write— and dramatizes it in her imagination:

> Oh, come with me, Mother and Mrs.Evans-Mawnington. Let me show you the exhibits straight from the battlefield. This will be something original to tell your committees, while they knit their endless miles of khaki scarves , . . . something to spout from the platform at your recruiting meetings. Come with me. Stand just there. (90)
>
> See the stretcher-bearers lifting the trays one by one, slotting them deftly into my ambulance. Out of the way quickly, Mother and Mrs. Evans-Mawnington—lift your silken skirts aside. . . a man is spewing blood, the moving has upset him, finished him. . . . He will die on the way to hospital if he doesn't die before the ambulance is loaded. (91)
>
> [.....] Spare a glance for my last stretcher, . . . that gibbering, unbelievable, unbandaged thing, a wagging lump of raw flesh on a neck, that was a face a short time ago, Mother and Mrs. Evans-Mawnington. Now it might be anything. . . a lump of liver, raw bleeding liver, that's what it resembles more than anything else, does it? (94-5)
>
> Don't go, Mother and Mrs. Evans-Mawnington, . . . don't go. I am loaded, but there are over thirty ambulances not filled up. [.....] Wait, wait, I have so much to show you before you return to your committees and your recruiting meetings, before you add to your bag of recruits. . . those young recruits you enroll so proudly with your patriotic speeches, your red, white and blue rosettes, your white feathers, your insults, your lies . . . any bloody lie to secure a fresh victim.
>
> What? You cannot stick it any longer? You are going? I didn't think you'd stay. But I've got to stay, haven't I? . . . I've got to stay. You've got me out here, and you'll keep me out here. You've got me haloed. I am one of the Splendid Young Women who are winning the War. . . . (96)

This hallucinatory scene like a play within a play goes on as long as seven pages. Here is the gist of the whole story and this racy, satirical writing itself articulates Smithy's attitude toward the Home Front. She is angry with complacent armchair patriots, notably "Mother and Mrs.Evans-Mawnington." Wartime propaganda pushed most women into the roles of

patriotic wife and mother, and they were in turn criticized by soldier poets and by their daughters actively involved in the war zones. Sassoon's well-known satirical poem "Glory of Women" (1918) claims that women at the insulated home front are blissfully ignorant of the actualities of war. Canonized soldier poets often blame women for their ignorance and for sending their boys off into the trenches. Their basically misogynistic speech has been regarded as authentic. Women mobilized in paramilitary and medical forces have been silenced, and when they do speak they accuse civilian women for the same reasons as male counterparts do. Smithy's writing is cruel to Mother and Mrs. Evans-Mawnington who, she thinks, are cruel themselves like goddesses of war, or wicked stepmothers. Gender is not the watershed dividing the home front and battlefront. Women who accepted the official gender script of motherhood and remained at the home front were attacked by both men and women mobilized. Women's wartime experience essentially being subordinated to those of men, women's firsthand experience of brutalities of war, like Smithy's, has not been regarded as authentic. War writings by women who actively served as nurses and ambulance drivers were erased again and again and were not paid due attention. These are the workings of the "double helix" which allow women to move forward during wartime but retain the relationships of domination and subordination intact. "In the grammar of social structure," say Higonnet and Higonnet, "women are 'auxiliary' verbs, despite all substitutions, the syntax remains the same." (38-9)

Regarding this scene of the guided battlefield tour, as it were, there may be allusions to two kinds of such tours. One is a visit to the war-zones by civilian writers with a view to reporting their impressions. Among them were Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, H. G. Wells, Arnold Bennett, Mrs. Humphrey Ward, commissioned by the authorities. Mrs. Ward who "was given tours of war industries, the Western Front, and Royal Navy vessels" wrote sentimental books praising England's effort.(Buitenhuis, 58-9) Ouditt indicates that this scene might be read as a parody of the guided tours undertaken by such propagandists as Mrs. Ward.(41) The other allusion, in my view, is to commercial battlefield tours already in vogue soon after the armistice. Even in January 1918 when fires of war were still raging, one Philip Johnson, a British serviceman, foresaw the tourists who would flock to the battlefield and wrote this satirical poem:

> Ladies and Gentlemen this is High Wood, . . .
> Observe the effect of shell-fire in the trees
> Standing and fallen; here is wire; this trench

For months inhabited, twelve times changed hands;
(They soon fall in), used later as a grave. . . .
Madame please,
You are requested kindly not to touch
Or take away the Company's property
As souvenirs; you'll find we have on sale
A large variety, all guaranteed.
As I was saying, all is as it was,
This is an unknown British officer,
The tunic having lately rotted off.
Please follow me—this way . . . the *path, sir*, please,
The ground which was secured at great expense
The company keeps absolutely untouched,
And in that dug-out (genuine) we provide
Refreshments at reasonable rate.
You are requested not to leave about
Paper, or ginger-beer bottles or orange-peel,
There are waste-paper-baskets at the gate.[5]

Battlefield tours to the Somme, Ypres and other parts of the Western Front continue to attract not only the descendants of British and Commonwealth soldiers who fought there but also people interested in the Great War like myself, though it may be called a "difficult heritage." In the guided tour above, civilians out of morbid curiosity rushed to the scenes of atrocity for war souvenir hunting. After the war ended, group tours organized by Thomas Cook and other travel companies flourished, let alone pilgrimages by bereaved families and relatives assisted by voluntary (again!) organizations such as the Salvation Army, the Church Army, St. Barnabas Society etc. In 1930 when Price's fictional autobiography was published, it was the time when battlefield tourism was booming, war memorials were erected in towns and villages throughout Europe, and battlefield guidebooks by Michelin written in English continued publication. (Lloyd, 13-48; Araki) It is likely that she had in mind battlefield tours offered by travel agencies when she wrote this bitter one woman show.

Ⅳ

A battlefield tour is not gender-specific, and so is battlefield experience. No women except for a handful actually fought in the war zone, but quite a few women like Smithy served in active service as medical or relief staff risking their lives under fire. Among dead and dying men they did the dirtiest and most difficult job no one wanted to do. Women's writing anchored in firsthand experience deconstructed the borderline between battlefront and home front, men and women. Their voices, far from being recognized as authentic, were banned. Ellen la Motte, another American nurse who worked in the same field hospital as Mary Borden, wrote scathingly about "these heaps that once were men," and "these wrecks upon the beds" (84, 85) in her *Backwash of War*, first published in 1916. It was soon suppressed in 1918, and not re-published until 1934. Enid Bagnold's *Diary Without Dates*(1918), her hospital experience, had her dismissed from the VAD hospital. Radcliffe Hall's best-known lesbian novel about an ambulance driver, *The Well of Loneliness*(1928) fell subject to censorship. When *Not So Quiet* was published, it became a best seller, but one reviewer suggested it be burned.(Marcus, 245) Her writing trespasses on men's war zone and nullifies feminine style, whatever it is. Pleading for a woman's share in the horrors of war, she overturned "the myth that writing comes from gender rather than experience." (Marcus, 261) Feminist historians and literary critics are now trying to show how men and women shared the common experience of grief of war, and how authentic is women's writing about war.

Vera Brittain, who served as a VAD nurse, felt at the later stage of the war that her "only hope was to become the complete automaton, working mechanically and no longer even pretending to be animated by ideas." (450) Smithy feels the same, emotion dry, after two of her friends in the convoy were accidentally killed in an air-raid. She thinks of what will happen to women who experienced the hell:

> What is to happen to women like me when this war ends . . . if ever it ends. I am twenty-one years of age, yet I know nothing of life but death, fear, blood, and the sentimentality that glorifies these things in the name of patriotism. (164)

She sees she will be fiercely reviled by old men for lacking femininity of all kinds.

> But what I do not see is pity or understanding for the war-shocked woman who sacrificed her

> youth on the altar of the war that was not of her making, the war made by age and fought by youth while age looked on and applauded and encored. Will they show us mercy, these arm-chair critics, once our uniforms are frayed and the romance of the war woman is no longer a romance? I see much, but this I do not see. (166)

Women as well as men are "war-shocked," she thinks: physical injury or pain may separate men from women, but they are equally "war products," "a race of men bodily maimed and of women mentally maimed." (167) With Trudi Tate we should say that that both men and women are vulnerable to physical injury and mental trauma in the face of modern weaponry. (Tate, 85) Smithy tries to establish a bond between the men and the women who served and shared the same experience, because they were "a race apart" from the older and younger generations.

Gendering of war has privileged men's service as combatants, but women's writing proves the essential sameness of experience of hardships and trauma. Higonnet points out that noncombatant medical staff (both male and female) near the front experienced extreme fatigue, the continuous confrontation with death and mutilated bodies, the sacrilegious responsibility of triage and so on.(2002: 95, 98) The grief and pain felt by women who lost their loved ones is no less heart-rending than for combatants who went through hell. Gender-based criticism of war writing is no longer valid, and a taxonomy of "women's writing" seems null as there are no universalized stereotypes as such. Evadne Price's war writing nullifies gender-specificity.

Virginia Woolf was also concerned with the essential sameness of war experience regardless of gender. In her novel *Mrs. Dalloway*(1925), Woolf juxtaposes Clarissa Dalloway, a politician's wife, with Septimus Warren Smith, a shell-shocked veteran. They never meet in the story, but the two main narratives converge at the end of the novel when Clarissa hears about Septimus's suicide. She feels empathy with the young man, for she thinks both are victims of oppressive society. Woolf's thesis here is more understandable, if we take into consideration *Three Guineas*(1938), a political work on militarism and anti-war. Here she tries to prove that militarism or fascism is linked to sexism or patriarchy as "the public and the private worlds are inseparably connected." (270) She describes how the fascist state interferes and makes distinctions between the sexes, races, religions. In her view it is essential for both men and women to resist the iniquity of dictatorship of any kind. The only way out for women is to become independent through acquiring education and professions.

Woolf believed men and women were equally vulnerable to domination by force. The

intellectuals of the Bloomsbury Group including herself were basically anti-war, ranging from pacifists, conscientious objectors to quietism. A Cambridge linguist, C. K. Ogden, wrote a book entitled *Militarism Versus Feminism* (1915) in collaboration with a suffragist painter, Mary Sargant Florence. They argued that militarism, conjoined with subservience of women, persisted through male-dominated language, education and religion, and asserted pacifism. Yet most publicly articulate British people accepted the war and were behind the war effort. Young men smilingly joined the eager lines at the recruiting stations, women proudly sacrificed their sons and husbands for their country. Seeming acceptance of patriotic sacrifice may well be the result of DORA (the Defence of the Realm Act) introduced by the British government in 1915 which suppressed any views opposed to the war. This psychological warfare of censorship and propaganda, first developed in Britain, efficiently worked to coerce the population into hostilities.

Smithy's mother and "A Little Mother", whose letter to the editor of *The Morning Post* was accepted with great applause throughout the country, are typical pictures of the patriotic mother. Robert Graves cites her letter in his memoir of the war *Goodbye to All That* (1929) as a "typical document of this time."

> We women pass on the human ammunition of "only sons" to fill up the gaps, so that when the "common soldier" looks back before going "over the top" he may see the women of the British race at his heels, reliable, dependent, uncomplaining. (189)

Graves writes that he could not understand "the war-madness that ran wild everywhere" nor "newspaper language" when he returned home temporarily for medical treatment. Like Smithy he found it impossible to have serious conversation with parents. To the returnees from the war front "England looked strange."

The militaristic mother image is also typified in the famous 1918 Red Cross recruiting poster "The Greatest Mother in the World." In the style of *Pietá* an enormous maternal nurse cradles a very small wounded soldier on a stretcher. The Madonna figure represents complete femininity in service required by the Propaganda Office: love, pity, nursing, self-sacrifice. Women were at the same time represented as the fearful matriarch, phallic mother, belligerent Bellona.[6] The ideology of war forces women to set up as mothers and the Mother Country to be protected and then accuses women of sending men out to fight. Mothers give birth and kill, and they are to blame. The real instigators of war, the old men, are hidden behind the scenes in this cunning scheme.[7] Smithy knows the blind foolishness of her Mother who is encouraging the sons of other women to murder their brothers. Her real

hatred is directed not to her mother but to the war-mad megalomaniac Commandant Mrs. Bitch, but she is herself actually a scapegoat and a faithful watchdog of the male authority figures.

V

The story ends thus. After she resigned from the ambulance corps and went home, Smithy enlisted again as a way of funding her sister's abortion—which must have been shocking to people those days— but this time as a domestic worker in WAACs mainly consisting of working class girls. Unlike VADs they are well paid and provided with uniforms. This is a further challenge to humiliate her parents and her class. She survived the bombing raid, reduced to a mere impassive automaton amid the mangled bodies of WAAC members.

War is bound up with sexual terms, and militarism is essentially associated with maleness. Why have women been often displaced with men as the originators of war? The answer seems to be lurking in misogyny and woman phobia coupled with male chauvinism. The representation of women as the spirit of war has a long cultural history, and not limited to British war propaganda. *Not So Quiet* dismisses the borderline between male writing and female writing and also poses this enigmatic juxtaposition of women and war.

Acknowledgements:

This paper is part of the research project on "Representations of the First World War as seen from gender perspective" (22510291) financially assisted by "Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research(KAKENHI)" from JSPS (the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science) for the years 2010-2012. I should like to express my sincere gratitude to Associate Professor Ian Richards for his valuable comments on my English after the first proof reading.

Notes:

1) The British Red Cross was established in 1905, merging two precedent organizations. The Order of St. John of Jerusalem has a long history of "work on behalf of the sick and wounded". In 1878 the St. John Ambulance Brigade was formed at Woolwich with a view to providing a supplementary corps to the Army Supplementary Corps. These two voluntary organizations, the British Red Cross and the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, were not on good terms, but the Geneva Convention of 1906 obliged them to come under the War Office and to work in collaboration in the event of war. Cf. E. Charles Vivian & J. E. Hodder Williams, *The Way of the Red Cross* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1915) Brian Abel-Smith, *The Hospitals 1800-1948 —A Study in Social Administration in England and Wales*

(London: Heinemann, 1964)

2) During the First World War a remarkable number of famous writers including Malcolm Cowley, Jon Dos Passos, Ernest Hemingway, Somerset Maugham, E.E.Cummings volunteered as ambulance drivers probably because they were somehow physically unfit as combatants. Cf: "Prose and Poetry—Literary Ambulance Drivers" http://www.firstworldwar.com/poetsandprose/ambulance.htm (accessed 1 July, 2011) Many of them remained in Paris and formed the Lost Generation. An American ambulance driver named Guy Emerson Bowerman, Jr. enlisted in the US Army Ambulance Service and served in France, as he was "too young for upcoming draft," according to his wife's uncle Mark C. Carnes, who published his diary in a book form. *The Compensations of War: The Diary of an Ambulance Driver during the Great War* (Austin: U of Texas P., 1983)

3) F. Tennyson Jesse, a British woman journalist, asked by the Ministry of Information to write an account of women's war work, reports in *The Sword of Deborah* (1915) that there were only five cases of "getting into trouble" out of six thousand WAACs. Online. Project Gutenberg eBook. Internet. 13 July 2011.

4) A Canadian VAD ambulance driver, Miss J.E.Harstone, describes one of her nights' work at Etaples, taking casualties from a hospital train to her ambulance: "They were like helpless children, those strong men who had been through hell for the sake of freedom. . . . Strange, all this, I felt suddenly that I had always helped to unload trains full of men who had been battered and bashed by the furies of a hell beyond all the imaginative powers of a Dante." Documents 9348, Misc 30(540) London: Imperial War Museum

5) Quoted in p7, Major & Mrs Holt's *Pocket Battlefield Guide to The Sommme 1916 / 1918* (Barnsley, Pen & Sword Books, 2006) According to the Note to this poem, there was a considerable debate about the identity of Philip Johnson. One much favored theory was that Philip Johnson was a pseudonym of Lt. John Stanley Purvis, who was wounded during the Somme battle and after the war returned to England.

6) Bram Dijkstra in *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siècle Culture* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986) traces many curious representations of woman as symbolic of the spirit of war produced in the time of the First World War.

7) Tylee 1988 and Marcus(275) suggest this touchy problem of women's two roles.

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【2011年9月8日受付，10月28日受理】

西部戦線異状あり—もう一つの戦場体験記

要旨—*Not So Quiet. . .Stepdaughters of War*は、第一次世界大戦中負傷兵を運ぶ救急車運転手として前線で働いた女性の自伝的小説である。当時女性達は、母親か看護婦として銃後に留まることを公的に要請されていたが、実際には、女性による擬似軍事組織や医療組織が編成され、前線に赴いて危険な目にあいながら、兵士達の救助にあたった。主人公は、戦場に近い所での経験を通して、伝統的な女らしさの観念は戦争と共に終わるものであることを知り、銃後の母親達は戦争の現実を何も知らずに、戦争遂行に加担していることに怒りをおぼえる。彼女が共感を感じるのは前線の兵士達で、愛国的な銃後は憎しみと批判の対象でしかない。前線に赴いた女性の体験とその体験を書いた手記は、男女の区別を無効にするものであるが、男性の体験、手記と比べると「ほんもの」とは見なされず、抹殺されてきた。しかも、戦争のイデオロギーは、銃後を守るべき母親としての役割分担を与えつつ、男を戦争に行かせたことで責めるような仕組になっている。*Not So Quiet*は、女性の書いたものという範疇を形式においても内容においても覆しつつ、戦争と性との昔ながらの謎めいた関係について、問題を提起している。